Grateful for You

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Grateful for You

by JSinister32

Summary

> “Friends?” he murmured, turning enough that Will was forced to relax into his chest. “Is that what we are?”
> Will tensed, leaned forward and set his glass on the coffee table they’d used to prop up their feet. Hannibal took the opportunity to deposit his glass on its surface as well - in the same motion, he lowered his arm, let it fall over Will’s shoulders. Will snuggled into his arms, let his head tip back against Hannibal’s shoulder.
> “Mm,” he agreed softly. “Friends are good to one another - friends take care of each other. And since today is the day to be grateful for such things…” he turned his head, caught Hannibal’s gaze, held it safely within his own. Hannibal swallowed, tried not to drown in endless blue.
> “I’m grateful you’re in my life, Hannibal,” Will confessed, voice as soft as mist. “And while I’d be happy to call you my friend until the end of my days, I would be lying if I said I haven’t been waiting all day for you to kiss me.”

OR
When Hannibal Lecter loses his sous chef before preparing Thanksgiving dinner, all of his wishes concerning his desire for a certain profiler come true in unexpected ways.

Notes

I didn't really get the chance to edit this fic because, as usual for Thanksgiving, I'm running late. I had to get it out, though, because we don't fuck with tradition.

I'm so thankful for every single person who reads and likes these fun little fics. You guys mean the world to me - I would not be who I am without you.

Thank you for being here. I love you all so much.

Let the Christmas Advent officially begin.

Hearts and Body Parts,
🤍JM

NOTE: I do not allow translations or additional archiving locations. Please let me know if you find this work anywhere except AO3, posted by me. I hate adding this note, but I hate my work being stolen even more. Thank you for understanding.

What if, today, were were
Grateful for everything?
-Charlie Brown

“Forgive me, Doctor Lecter. I know this mix up must come as a severe frustration for you on such an important culinary day of the year, but we were overbooked by three persons and I must ensure we go in the order of our initial bookings. This puts you as last on the list. As such, we will not be able to provide a sous chef today.”

Hannibal Lecter pulled at the sash of the plush crimson robe that covered his pajamas and leaned into the side of his counter top; he tried and failed to quell the sudden heat of irritation as it coursed through his system. *This cannot be happening. It cannot.*

“Is there anyone you can recommend in your stead?” he pleaded. The sound of his own voice turned his stomach - he was unused to being the beggar in any situation, but if it got him some assistance for the day, he’d drop to his knees right where he stood.

“I’ve already given a call to everyone I know,” the voice on the other line replied sadly. “All catering companies in the area are booked with their own events.”

“I see,” the doctor murmured faintly. “In that case, I really must go. I have much more work cut out for me than I initially planned. Good day.”

“Should you ever need our services again, we’d be happy to offer you—”

Hannibal cut the call before he started to scream, and let his phone fall to the countertop. *Of course this is how the day is to begin. How else could it possibly go?*

When he’d taken on the task of hosting Thanksgiving dinner for his colleagues in the Behavioral Sciences department of the FBI, he’d thought it would be a breeze. The dishes on his menu were decided months in advance; ingredients were perused and sourced, paid for and shipped to him with weeks to spare. All he had to do was prepare the actual meal, and he’d once again be labeled an epicurean legend amongst those whose opinions he held in high esteem.

It was four days ago when everything began to go wrong.

The turkeys he’d selected had been lost in shipment. Vexed, he’d gone to a butcher three towns over and selected far less succulent birds, but he wouldn’t let it quell his desire to present a holiday feast like none ever seen before. When the linens he’d sent to be pressed were picked up, they’d been covered with minuscule but noticeable burn marks; Hannibal replaced them with covers in similar colors but of lesser quality, despondence hooking claws into his already strained heart as he adjusted the height of the candlesticks to hide the flaws in the fabric.

He'd spent two days polishing candle holders, working until his hands and back ached from the physical labor, just to ensure he wouldn't run into any additional problems. Halfway through, he'd run out of polish. Every location close enough to drive had been out of the only brand he insisted on using; Hannibal had been forced to order it online, and spent the night before, finishing a task that should have been completed days ago and not by his own hand. Exhaustion had finally overtaken him when he collapsed into bed, eyes falling closed before he could muster the energy to change out of his clothes. He'd woken two hours later, hot and uncomfortably bound, still clad in slacks and a sweater. He'd managed to change before sleep dragged him down once more, but it had nothing to adjust his disposition.

Now, on the morning he needed to get started on the meal he planned to serve, the sous chef on which he'd been so heavily reliant canceled at the very last moment. Irritation was slowly melting away to panic; it was already nearly five in the morning, and Hannibal stood frozen in his kitchen, phone clutched in his hand, wondering for the first time in his long history of throwing dinner parties if he should cancel the event altogether. He'd never felt stressed by cooking before, but this event was… different. He genuinely liked those who were coming to his home to enjoy his food. He wanted to give them the experience they so deserved. *And there is no possible way I can host such a monumental meal without assistance. Perhaps it would be best—*

The quiet knock on his door startled Hannibal out of the agitated spiral of his thoughts. The doctor's spirits immediately lifted; relief flooded his system in a wild rush. He pulled the door open with more force than necessary; startled, he stumbled back, doorknob still clutched in his fingers. *Perhaps the culinary company was able to spare someone after all.*

The person standing on the other side of the door froze him in his tracks; forced him to right himself with more decorum than he felt capable. *God on high, of course it is him. How could this day possibly get any worse?*

Will Graham, his kind-of patient and sometimes friend, the object of his secret affections, smiled tentatively at him from beneath the lamplight, a covered dish clasped in his hands. Stunned, Hannibal gripped the doorknob tighter and opened his mouth, tried to make his vocal cords produce some kind of sound, but nothing would come forth.

"Hi Hannibal," Will greeted, breath swirling in the cold November air. The puff of visible breath made the doctor's heart inexplicably squeeze hard beneath his ribs. "I know it's early," the profiler pressed on, "but I also knew you'd be spending the entire day preparing the meal for tonight. I thought I'd check on you before the day got into full swing."

Hannibal's shocked gaze lowered to the dish; with a start, he recognized the black leather gloves as the pair he'd presented Will with the year before - a small token of their friendship for Christmas. He'd never seen them on Will's hands before. Something warm and desperate curled in his stomach like tendrils of cloying smoke, filling his mind with foggy desire. *I do not have time for this, but what I would give to ravish him in those gloves. Feel them on my skin as we—*

Will raised an eyebrow, but said nothing, clearly waiting for a response.

“Hello, Will,” Hannibal finally rasped. His voice was rough; he cleared his throat uncomfortably, hoping against all odds that Will couldn’t hear the affect of the profiler’s sudden appearance on him. “Thank you for thinking of me, but I am already far behind schedule as it is, and I cannot—”

“Can I come in?” Will interrupted. “I won’t stay long, but I brought you breakfast.” He held up the dish in his hands in offering. “I wanted to make sure you get some fuel in you before the day begins. You’re surprisingly terrible at taking care of yourself if someone doesn’t force it.” Stunned once more into silence, Hannibal stepped aside and admitted the other man into his home.

“Forgive me,” the doctor tried again. “I am normally dressed to receive guests on busy days such as today.” Will turned back, let his eyes trail slowly down Hannibal’s plush red dressing gown. Hannibal felt his cheeks flush with heat; did his best to quell the sudden tingling rush that accompanied Will’s lingering gaze. *Cease this… whatever it is. You are not some besotted fool - you do not even know his real reason for appearing at your doorstep.*

“How about I plate up breakfast while you get dressed?” Will offered, breaking Hannibal free of his fragmented thoughts. Hannibal adamantly shook his head.

“That would make me a terribly neglectful host,” he protested. “Especially at such an inconvenient hour.”

Will rolled his eyes and gave the doctor’s shoulder a gentle shove.

“I’m the one who intruded upon your obviously busy morning, Hannibal. Plus, it’s been a long time since I could be considered a guest in your home. Go get dressed. I’ll plate up our food.” Hannibal’s brain felt as if it had been filled with static.

“But—”

“You’re wasting time with arguing and you still have a lot to do,” Will reminded him, already striding towards the kitchen. “Tick tock, Doctor Lecter.”

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“I wasn’t aware you could prepare meals of this caliber,” Hannibal remarked, wiping his mouth with the linen napkin Will had passed him as they’d taken their seats at the counter. “Are you professionally trained, or is it natural talent?”

Will popped the last bite of pancake into his mouth, chewing thoughtfully as he watched Hannibal clean the last bit of food from his own plate. The doctor had returned downstairs in a comfortable looking pair of dark brown slacks and a cozy oatmeal colored sweater; his hair was soft and looked as if it would slide through the profiler’s fingers unless he gripped - tugged, perhaps. The thought made his stomach tighten pleasantly. *Can’t be too obvious. He has no idea of your attraction and now is not the time. Keep it together.*

“I worked in a diner in college,” he replied. “Nothing fancy, but I learned to cook breakfast quite well.” Hannibal nodded, admiration clear in his features.

“That does not come as a surprise. You’re rather talented at anything you attempt.” Will ducked his head, the tips of his ears turning a pleasing shell pink.

“Thank you, Hannibal. That means a lot coming from a chef of your reputation.”

Hannibal opened his mouth to quip back a reply; his eyes caught the clock, wringing a groan from his throat.

“As much entertainment as I would undoubtedly receive from trading compliments with you, I’m afraid I will have to cut this visit short. The assistance I was expecting canceled at the last minute and I have yet to truly begin my preparations for tonight.”

Unfazed, Will nodded and collected their plates, carrying them to the kitchen with the grace of a waiter in a Michelin rated restaurant.

“No problem,” he replied, turning on the sink. “I figured you’d be busy until tonight.” Hannibal hummed in response and tried not to stare at the line of Will’s shoulders beneath the thin material of the navy colored Henley that graced his form as if it had been made for him. *And yet I’d give up my grand aspirations today to take you to bed. Press my mouth to yours and taste the sweetness of your moans as you fall apart in my arms.*

“Did you say you were expecting help?” Will asked, breaking Hannibal from his thoughts. The doctor nodded miserably.

“I was anticipating their arrival over an hour ago,” he lamented. “As it is, I will likely have to push the meal back by the same amount of time, just to ensure we can eat at all.”

“I can sous chef for you.” Hannibal’s stomach flipped.

“Surely you have better ways of spending your day today, Will.” The profiler shrugged; a Gaelic lift of a single shoulder that made Hannibal’s mouth water.

“I don’t mind. A second set of hands will lighten your workload, and although I may not have your keen palate for spices or eye for plating, I can prepare the ingredients for you to work with.”

Hannibal suppressed the urge to shiver - he wanted it; to see Will in his kitchen, white apron wrapped around his slender waist as Hannibal fed him morsels from his fingers in a feigned attempt at taste testing, the texture of Will’s tongue grazing his digits as they tried not to kiss —

“Your assistance would be greatly appreciated,” Hannibal agreed before he could stop himself - his agreement did little to force the images from his mind. “You have no idea how much you’re saving me to day, Will.” Will nodded and dried his hands on the towel set next to the sink before turning to meet Hannibal’s gaze.

“It’s not a problem, Doctor. What would you like me to do?”

Hannibal made his way to the pantry and returned a moment later, clutching two identical aprons.

“I’ll try to keep from being too particular, as I have no right since you’re giving up an entire day to prepare a meal you should be consuming.” Will laughed and took the apron from Hannibal’s outstretched hands.

“Maybe I’ll surprise you,” Will shot back with a grin, deftly tying the strings around his waist. Hannibal flushed and fumbled with his own ties; Will’s fingertips brushed his own, silently asking permission to assist. Hannibal lowered his hands and tried to breathe through their sudden proximity as Will looped his strings in the front before tying them with professional precision. Will brushed a hand down the ties, stepped back with a nod.

“Where would you like me to start?” *In bed. Beneath me as I fill you.*

“Perhaps with the herbs,” Hannibal rumbled, gathering ingredients from the fridge. “As finely as you can, please, except for these.” He indicated a larger bushel of several fresh plants. “They’ll need to be—”

“Bundled,” Will nodded, already measuring out a length of the twine that graced Hannibal’s countertop. “Aromatics for the inside of the turkey, I presume. No problem.”

Hannibal stood, frozen in place as he watched Will slice through the twine with a pair of kitchen shears, cutting it as if he’d spent every moment of his adult life in a kitchen.

“Time’s ticking, Doc,” he chided, eyes shining with mischief as he glanced up from where he’d begun to wind the twine around the first carefully selected bundle. “Best get a move on or we’ll be here all day.”

Hannibal flushed and briefly closed his eyes, praying for some semblance of decorum as he picked up a knife.

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“Growing up in Europe, you must have had something resembling a Fall festival that wasn’t Samhain, right? I’ve always been fascinated by the traditions of older cultures, but don’t know many who’ve had real world experience with them.”

Will added a touch more sugar to the pan he was stirring, watching carefully as the cranberries contained within burst in bright, fragrant bouquets of red. Behind him, Hannibal nodded and tried futilely to keep his eyes on his own task, too absorbed in the conversation they were having to pay too close attention to what he was doing. They’d made it through the turkeys and dressing in record speed; Hannibal’s hands were currently mixing the rice stuffing he’d insisted upon while Will took on smaller tasks, like the cranberries on which he was currently working. The tangy scent wafting from his pan was almost as delectable as the man himself. *Focus. We need to complete our work and he asked you a question.*

“When I was a child, our estate played host to Nubaigai,” he responded, brushing the last grains of rice from his hands and into the bowl. “If there was a festival similar to Thanksgiving, I’m sure that would have been it.” Will glanced back from his post at the stove and nodded enthusiastically.

“Sounds fascinating. Tell me more about it.”

Hannibal let his eyes shutter closed as he recalled the bright colors and songs; the birds, stuffed with apples and bread, bursting with juices as they were cooked over an open flame. He let the door that barred his bitter memories crack open a tiny bit; saw his sister dancing in the firelight as they sang their traditional reaping song.

“The festivities will seem somewhat primitive by American standards,” he began, “but you must remember that my father was the count of a province in Lithuania that still contained a great deal of farmland. During Nubaigai, the harvest festival, a great, ornate wreath was created and carried throughout the town to our estate; a traditional reaping song was sung in homage to those who once rescued the crops from a bison that threatened to devour them, that was overcome by those brave enough to take up arms and fell the beast.”

Will turned to listen, rapt attention in his handsome features as he nodded for Hannibal to continue.

“When they reached our estate, we would feast. Song, dance, a great fire was held after.”

“On bison?” Will joked. Hannibal grinned and covered the dish that contained his stuffing, setting it to the side until it was time to cook.

“Pheasant stuffed with bread and apples,” he corrected. “And pears and mead. Items easily procured from the year’s harvest, or bartered for with merchants passing through before the snows overtook the roads.” Will hummed and transferred the cranberries into a stout crystal bowl. A single berry escaped; he caught it midair and popped into his mouth, licking away the juice from his palm with a quick, pink tongue. Hannibal’s gut tightened pleasantly at the sight.

“Sounds Pagan.”

“It was,” Hannibal agreed, his eyes still trained on the faint glistening red that shone at the very corner of Will’s mouth. “But part of our traditions, willfully upheld by my father. It was… not an unpleasant way to spend a cold fall evening.”

Will stepped closer; reached behind Hannibal for a dish towel. The doctor caught the edge of the scent of Will’s shampoo; he wanted to plunge his hands into Will’s curls and kiss the life from him. *Patience. You do not need to scare him away on the precipice of the possibility of something else between you.*

“And you?” he asked, covering the cranberry dish with foil. “What did the Graham household do for Thanksgiving when you were young?” Will sighed and leaned back into the countertop, wiping his hands idly with the dish towel.

“Made a boring meal, suffered through boring relatives that spent the afternoon getting drunk and arguing about the most mundane subjects imaginable, and watched boring sports on TV. Nothing as exciting as dancing to songs about bison.” Hannibal’s grin lit up his entire face.

“It was the aftermath of Thanksgiving that was always my favorite,” Will continued. He braced his hands behind him and pressed, sliding up until he sat on top of the countertop. Hannibal leaned back against the sink opposite of where the profiler perched and crossed his arms, waiting for the profiler to continue. Will’s eyes clouded over wistfully; Hannibal’s very soul softly groaned. *Do you know? Have you any idea of the effect you have on my restraint?*

“The morning after Thanksgiving, we went to a tree farm and cut down our Christmas tree,” Will reminisced. “Dragged it to the car and took it home. Once it had the afternoon to soak in enough water, we’d decorate it in brightly colored baubles and enough tinsel to give my mother fits when it came down. Inevitably, I’d fall asleep in front of it that night, basking in the multicolored glow for the first time of the season. I took every possible opportunity to do so until it came down each year.” He lowered his head, pain flashing so quickly through his features, Hannibal wondered if it had been a trick of the light.

“Is this a current tradition?” Hannibal inquired gently. *Careful. There is a deep hurt there. Gently.*

“No,” Will replied simply. “I haven’t decorated a tree in many years. Don’t have the time to put it up or anyone to celebrate with. It would be depressing to do it just for me.” Hannibal nodded thoughtfully.

“Understandable.”

A beat of silence passed between them, fragile as glass. Will broke the sudden quiet with a cough and slid from the countertop, untying his apron with a soft smile.

“Well, looks like we got it pulled together after all. And we still have time to spare that I can go home and change.” Hannibal glanced once more at the clock; to his astonishment, it was barely after one in the afternoon - he still had hours left to him before his guests were due to arrive.

“I am unsure I will find a proper way to thank you,” he murmured, accepting the proffered apron from Will’s hands. “This entire endeavor wouldn’t have been possible without you.”

“Consider it repayment for how you put me back together every day we work together,” Will replied. “There’s no additional thanks needed.” Hannibal followed him to the door, lost for the words that would keep the other man there just a little longer.

“Will, I—”

The profiler turned, silencing him with the look on his face. Hesitant fingers brushed across Hannibal’s cheek, cupped it in the warmth of a palm.

“I’ll see you in a couple of hours,” he murmured, stroking the skin beneath his hand. “Save me a seat, yeah?” Hannibal nodded, strangely unable to speak. The door opened and closed, admitting Will into the frigid November air.

It took longer than Hannibal wanted to admit for him to find his way upstairs to shower. *Maybe… perhaps something more is possible.*

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"Incredible meal, Hannibal," Jimmy gushed. "You definitely know how to dress a table. We have to do this again sometime."

Hannibal nodded graciously, and glanced down the corridor at where Will stood, chatting with his coworkers, completely at ease in Hannibal's home. The profiler was engulfed in Beverly's arms, whispering words into her hair as she pulled him tighter, incredulity plain on her face.. Their eyes met briefly; Hannibal looked away, cheeks coloring at being caught staring.

"Of course," he offered graciously, ushering Jimmy and Brian through the door. "I'd be happy to have you."

Beverly relinquished her grip on Will and strode forward, offering Hannibal a soft squeeze to his shoulder and a quick thank you before fleeing through the doors after her ride. The door fell closed behind them with a resounding thud; Hannibal leaned into the wooden barrier and breathed a sigh of relief. The last of his guests had lingered; he only wanted one of them to remain. *Speaking of—*

"Glad it's over?" Will asked as he approached. He handed Hannibal his still half-full glass of wine; Hannibal took it gratefully and brought it to his lips, relishing in the bright, heady burst of flavor over his tongue.

"Immensely," he admitted. "I had no idea American holidays could be so exhausting."

Will chuckled, twirled his own glass through his fingers by the stem.

"We got off easy, too," remarked, watching the liquid in his cup. "No fighting or politics to be found." Hannibal laughed and let his head fall back against the door.

"Easy or no, it will be some time before I offer to host."

"Oh I don't know," Will replied. "I actually had a lot of fun this morning. If you ever brave another holiday feast, I'd help you do it again." Before Hannibal could process what he'd said, Will inclined his head towards the kitchen. "C'mon doctor. I'll wash and you dry. We'll be done in no time."

Hannibal followed the profiler to the kitchen, heart in his throat.

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"Now, this is more like it," Will groaned. "A nice, quiet evening to end the chaos of Thanksgiving. Warm, toasty fire, a glass of wine, and a friend at my side."

When the dishes were completed, Hannibal had collected the bottle of wine and their glasses and ushered Will to the sitting room, collapsing beside him on the couch as the wood he

added crackled and popped merrily. He'd topped off their glasses; neither of them really needed it. Will settled into himself and the evening, staring at the doctor with wide, knowing eyes, all softly swollen pupil and gentle, easy grins. Hannibal had pulled the blanket from the back of the couch an hour ago, draping it over their laps as they sank into the delight of firelight and proximity.

Drinking to the middle of their glasses brought them closer, shoulders brushing with each inhaled breath. Hannibal steeled himself against his own nerves and draped an arm over the back of the couch; Will didn't hesitate to occupy the new space available to him. The long, warm line of his body against Hannibal's side brought a moan to the base of his throat; Hannibal swallowed it down with another sip of wine and fought to keep from kissing the man so very close to being in his arms.

"Friends?" he mused, turning enough that Will was forced to relax into his chest. "Is that what we are?"

Will tensed but forced himself to relax; he leaned purposefully forward and set his glass on the coffee table they'd used to prop up their feet. Hannibal took the opportunity to deposit his glass on its surface as well - in the same motion, he lowered his arm, let it fall over Will's shoulders. Will snuggled into his arms, let his head tip back against the swell of Hannibal's chest.

"Mm," he agreed softly. "Friends are good to one another - friends take care of each other. And since today is the day to be grateful for such things…" he turned his head, caught Hannibal's gaze, held it securely within his own. Hannibal swallowed, tried not to drown in endless blue.

"I'm grateful you're in my life, Hannibal," Will confessed, his voice as soft as mist. "And while I'd be happy to call you my friend until the end of my days, I would be lying if I said I haven't been waiting all day for you to kiss me."

Hannibal carded trembling fingers through Will's curls.

"Kiss you?" he repeated, tugging hard enough for Will's head to tip back, baring the soft skin of his throat. He pressed his lips against Will's pulse, relished in the feel of it as it jumped beneath his mouth. Will let out an aborted moan; a high, needy sigh as Hannibal caressed the flesh offered up so freely to his ministrations.

"Please," Will breathed. "We've been dancing around one another forever. Don't you think its—"

Hannibal didn't allow him to finish. With all the strength his arousal allowed him, he stood and scooped Will into his arms. The profiler wrapped his legs around Hannibal's waist; the first kiss they shared was filled with joyous laughter against parted lips as they stumbled through the darkened house towards Hannibal's bedroom.

The fire burned low in the grate, embers pulsing bright blue and orange before finally fading to deep grey as they died out. On the other side of the house, the bedroom door remained firmly closed, sealed off against the chill.

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Will Graham awoke to the scent of wood smoke and sex. He blearily looked around, unsure of his surroundings for all of the three seconds it took him to focus on his companion, still curled beneath the sheets. Beside him, his lover slumbered on, worn from their exertions the night before. Will stretched against the covers, reveling in aches throughout his body that he hadn't felt in decades. It took him some time to remember how he'd received each one; the perusal of his memories was enough to whet his already growing, if slightly sleepy appetites. *Christ, did all of that really happen?*

Perusing the marks that decorated his body ensured him that everything he remembered were, indeed, wonderful memories to cherish instead of the fevered fantasies they'd been before he'd braved confessing his feelings to Hannibal. The night they had seemed to be as much relief on both their parts as a wondrous culmination of long held-back emotions coming to a head in the most sensual way imaginable.

Hannibal had been delightfully thorough in his lovemaking; breathless kisses lasted until the door to the bedroom closed firmly behind them. In the rush to reach Hannibal's skin, their clothes had unceremoniously fallen around them like rain; Hannibal's hands caressed his body as if he'd been waiting his entire life to do so. He was so distracted by tracing the lines and curves of Will's form that he'd had to be verbally coaxed into opening Will up to take his cock. The profiler had been close to passing out by the time Hannibal slicked his fingers; he'd never felt so simultaneously open and vulnerable with another person as he did when Hannibal's fingers finally sought their way between his cheeks. Hannibal had enough faculties left to him to tease; a single digit circled the profiler's opening, testing with barely there caresses until Will rocked down on the pressure enough for the first gentle ingress. Only then did Hannibal begin working him in earnest, kissing away Will's cries with softly whispered words against his parted lips.

Will had moaned himself close to hoarse at the stretch of Hannibal's long, thick fingers; his lover murmured words of praise as he relaxed beautifully around them.

"So warm, my darling. You're so wonderfully tight."

"Relax for me. That's my good, pretty boy."

"You're taking me so well, Will. Just a little more and you can have all of me."

Will could barely keep still; he would have done anything to keep the words pouring forth from Hannibal's lips like bright, filthy diamonds. He wanted to be Hannibal's good boy for the rest of his life - would prove he had the right to be, even if it took him a lifetime.

When Hannibal found his prostate, Will's back had bowed off the mattress. Hannibal sank his teeth into his throat as he abused his new favorite spot; Will managed to beg him to take him in whispers before Hannibal finally relented, loosening the grip of his teeth as he slicked up his cock. Will watched him hungrily, committing every curve and inch of Hannibal's length to memory, encapsulating everything he experienced to this first, perfect time together. The soft, spongy head brought another kind of emotion into his throat; Will let the shaky, overwhelmed moan loose into the air as he was finally, blessedly breached; filled to

the brim with all the care and intimacy he didn't want to admit he wanted, but couldn't imagine not having again. In a single, shining moment, he'd been ruined for anyone else.

Hannibal hadn't managed to slide completely inside him before Will came with a cry, untouched and panting as Hannibal struggled to breathe down his own arousal. Will urged him to move with a soft kiss and a breathy laugh; it had taken mere minutes afterwards for the doctor to follow him down, panting out unintelligible words into Will's shoulder as he trembled in the profiler's arms.

Neither spoke a word about stamina - it had been too long coming for them to expect much else, and both reveled in the absolute joy that this was to be their first of many, many times together.

Their second time happened around midnight; Hannibal awoke to Will's mouth around his cock, coaxing him to hardness before the profiler climbed into his lap. The stretch the second time burned away all memories of previous partners - Will knew, without a single doubt, he'd never be with someone else.

They'd fucked to the point of exhaustion; the sun kissed the skies with gold when Hannibal kissed Will quiet, cleaning their exertions from his skin with a warm, soft cloth. Two more orgasms apiece left them both empty and more tired than they'd been in years - they'd fallen asleep wrapped against the cold, the sun already climbing into a vast sea of blue as their eyes drooped closed.

Will sifted through his memories, idly stroking through Hannibal's hair as he let himself relive his favorite moments from their night together. He knew he should wake the other man - they'd never be able to sleep that night if they didn't get out of bed in the next hour or so. He just… couldn't bring himself to do it; Hannibal's features softened to something angelic when he slumbered, and he wanted to cherish the look on his face just a little longer. The tight, almost painful pang in his chest didn't concern him - he'd known it was love before they'd so much as shared a kiss. He didn't feel anything but grateful. Hannibal looked at him as if he'd carved the moon from the skies. He knew he wouldn't have to ask - that being in love with the man beside him would be as easy as breathing.

Maybe it's time to dig out the Christmas ornaments, he mused, stroking a hand through Hannibal's hair. *Make new traditions from old and painful memories. Make them better for both of us.*

The emotions in Hannibal's gaze when his eyes finally opened answered the question for him.

"Good morning, darling." Will's smile made his cheeks ache.

"Morning, love. Breakfast?" Hannibal dragged him closer with a delightfully muscled arm.

"Soon," he breathed against Will's mouth. "First, let me help you whet your appetites."

Will pressed his lips to Hannibal's and drew the covers over their heads. Later sounded great; for now, their life together was about to truly begin.

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